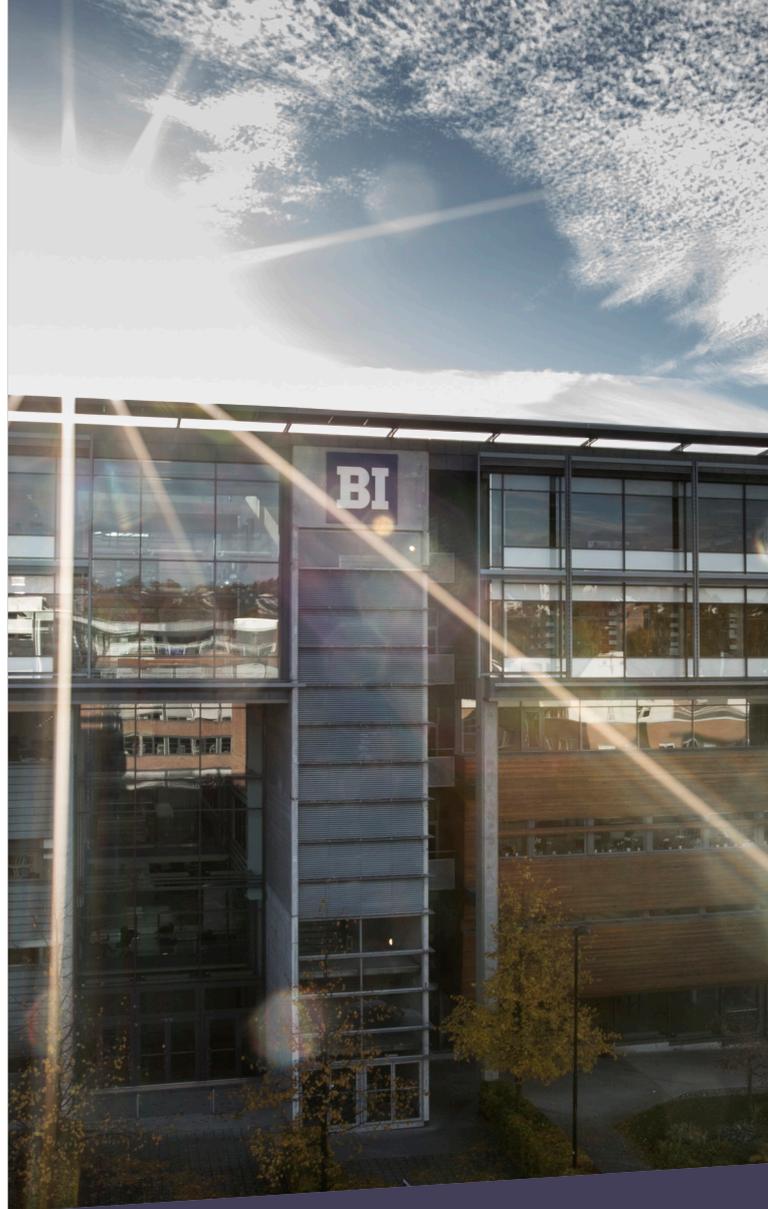


# BI Norwegian Business School and itslearning work together to predict student dropouts

Most universities experience a high number of student dropout rates. BI Norwegian Business School in Norway recently started a project to reduce this number by identifying dropout candidates at an early stage. By using the Advanced Reporting capabilities of itslearning, BI has not only set a goal to reduce student dropouts, but also to make better decisions using learning analytics.



4 Campuses in Norway



22,000 Students every year



800 Employees



Ranked #1 in Norway by the Financial Times 2018



## Overview

- BI Norwegian Business School is an independent non-profit organisation that relies partially on student fees
- Student dropouts represent a major challenge for most universities
- The Digital Department at BI is using the Advanced Reporting capabilities in itslearning in a dropout reduction project

*"The dropout reduction project is a joint effort between itslearning and BI. itslearning has helped us develop the documentation, interpret the data, and determine the actions to be taken. We've had great help from itslearning to support our analyses."*

**Bernt Smilden**  
Architect, Digital Department at BI

2010

Year implemented itslearning



*“We are committed to helping our students succeed with their educational ambitions, and we are pleased that itslearning is helping us do just that”*

**Amund Bergan,**

Head of Digital Development at BI

## An innovative approach to solving common challenges in higher education

BI Norwegian Business School is the main provider of business and management education in Norway; offering Bachelor, Masters and PhD degrees. BI has an enrolment of over 20,000 students each year and four campuses located in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger.

BI adopted itslearning in 2010. Today, all learning material is available within itslearning and the platform is used in most courses. itslearning is the main source of student activity data and students use the learning platform every day to access their courses, collaborate with other students, and get feedback from teachers.

A huge challenge among universities today is the student dropout rates, especially during the first years of study. Students may quit their programs for several reasons, including not being able to find the right career path, lacking understanding of courses, and finding balance between professional and personal life. BI is not free from these challenges and has been exploring different alternatives to retain students.

The university staff were introduced to the Advanced Reporting capabilities in itslearning to enhance learning outcomes and to make better decisions. This feature allows universities to pull detailed reports from itslearning's data warehouse and use valuable insights to increase learning platform usage, user engagement, student progress, learning objective achievement, resource usage and much more.

## Giving shape to an ambitious project to reduce dropout rates

According to Bernt Smilden, Architect in the Digital Department at BI, the theoretical foundation for the student dropout analysis is a model developed by Vincent Tinto in 1997. This model is recognised as one of the most influential regarding this subject. Bernt Smilden

and his team adapted this model to the environment of the institution. This project began in the summer of 2017 with the first stage based on experiences from universities in the USA.

Experts at BI learned that it was possible to achieve significant benefits with a limited effort, by using the learning platform in a consistent manner throughout all courses. With the right help from itslearning, BI could adapt the Advanced Reporting feature in the platform to get the data they needed specifically for this purpose.

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## Initial findings of the project

The first stage of the project provided insight regarding effort. Three main reasons were identified: academic integration, initial motivation and social integration.

Smilden also recognised that a unified learning platform enables a standardised delivery method across all courses. And with the help of the itslearning Data Warehouse API, BI can make use of the continuous activity data about the students' engagement with their courses.

The next step is to ask the right questions and to get feedback from the students – this way it will be possible to use a holistic approach for improvement. This project, however, is at early phases of implementation. Smilden explains, “what we study and address in early stages seems to have an effect, and the expectations of this project is to have a positive impact on dropout rates”.



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